The COMMONWEAL

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Meyers and Mobility

IF Major General Bennett E. Meyers (retired) finds time to read the newspapers, between sessions of the Senate War Investigation sub-committee before which he is appearing, he will see that the public is receiving an impression that he was inordinately interested in private business at a time (wartime) when he was supposed to be exclusively interested in the business of providing the Air Force with machinery to fight the war. Meyers has not yet and may not ever be convicted of malfeasance; he is not yet in jail and may keep out of jail; so we speak mildly and courteously about a case which is not yet *sub judice*. The Meyers case has however this interest. It is an abnormal and regrettable perversion of a process which Americans have always been proud of.

In America, more than elsewhere, poor men have been able to become rich, and once in a while it goes the other way: that is the American principle of mobility, in a society in which classes are not permanently stabilized. We have always liked that idea and, from the first immigrant to the most recent, the people who have built this country have placed in it their hopes.

A legitimate application of the principle has been the migration of business men, lawyers, professors, and even poets, in and out of public service. Professional men have left their professions to serve the state and, after a period of service, have returned to their professions. Business men have done the same thing. And there is nothing improper in this kind of mobility. In a nation that has always been very busy, first taking care of Indians, then of immense space, rivers and mountains, then of an expanding economy, with railroads and cities to build, has such mobility not existed there would have been no one to work for the state.

When a poor man enters the service of the state, attains prominence in that service, and then leaves it for extremely remunerative employment in some large corporation, or to become "czar" of an industry (sports or entertainment), the process still is legitimate, although statesmen of earlier times who retired to their farms (or Cincinnati to their ploughs) may seem to have possessed a more sure sense of dignity.

Mobility is all right when it consists in moving from one place to another; it is all wrong when you can no longer tell one place from any other, and you are moving about without knowing which place you are in.

That is the situation when a man who is serving the state has a mind so mobile that it is here, there and everywhere simultaneously; watching the board in the stock exchange, watching the bids for government contracts, watching the jobs that will reward its activity after the service of the state is performed, or even while it still is being performed. That is the principle of mobility carried to the point of a disease, which corrupts. Major General Meyers (retired), on his own testimony, is suffering from an advanced case of that disease.

He is busy defending himself before the Senate Committee and perhaps he has no time to read the papers. But suppose he did see the British story about Hugh Dalton, or suppose someone told him about this Chancellor of the Exchequer who had to resign immediately because innocently he had told an old newspaper friend some details of the budget before he had presented it in the House. Would Meyers feel the immense gap between the way his mind has been working through recent years and the way the mind of a British public servant is obliged by tradition to work?

Or would he not? If he thought only that the English are quaint, then it is time that we watched this mobility of ours. In the past, it has led beneficently a man from one place in this country to another place where he desired to go. It has led

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from insecurity to security, and from ignorance to knowledge. We must watch it to see that it does not lead to a state of confusion in which it is no longer possible to distinguish a public servant from a man who wants to make money, a General in the United States Army from a speculator.

The Nation *on the Church*

TWO things, among many others, might be said about the articles on the Church in recent issues of the *Nation*—specifically dealing with medical ethics, sexual morality and education, fields which are not without their difficult problems. The assumption, throughout Paul Blanshard's series, that Catholics are sharply divided is unwarranted. Even Catholics who do not follow the doctrines and discipline of the Church indicate their loyalty at least by recognizing their defections as sin. Secondly, the author has failed to develop enough sympathy to understand, as from inside, the Church's doctrine and practical applications in these matters. Therefore a serious, detailed discussion of Mr. Blanshard's charges would be footless here. The manner of his approach and the extent of his knowledge and comprehension may be gathered from his presentation of Pius XI's Encyclical on Marriage (1930) simply as a document forbidding the use of contraceptives. Mr. Blanshard concludes this point: "Who would venture to suggest that it was only an unfortunate mistake by an old man who had never married and never studied medicine?" Who indeed!

The Blur of Secularism

THE STATEMENT of the Catholic Bishops of the United States concerning secularism is the most intensely gloomy statement we can recall our hierarchy ever delivering. The cardinals, archbishops and bishops who make up the administrative board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference prove conclusively that the Church in this country views our manifest public problems—"perhaps the gravest crisis in all history"—without the hollow, insensitive, and unaware optimism which is often attributed to America, but rather with the wise and mature—almost a disillusioned; Christianly pessimistic—realism which has brought up mankind from many catastrophes and has also accompanied men into many deep depths.

As a statement of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, we believe it correct to take the utterance in a somewhat (but by no means narrowly) specialized context. It is the Church face to face with the social condition of the country and the world, the culture of the times, looking at the temporal order. It does not embody the whole Christian message of the complete Church, urging us in its paragraphs first to the inspiriting good news of the Christian Gospel.

The need, the lack, the want, in the way the world is going is made oppressively evident. The condition, or the climate, is that of *secularism,* a subtle, amorphous and pervasive thing to get hold of.

> It is a view of life that limits itself not to the material in exclusion of the spiritual, but to the human here and now in exclusion of man's relation to God here and hereafter. Secularism, or the practical exclusion of God from human thinking and living, is at the root of the world's travail today. It was the fertile soil in which such social monstrosities as fascism, nazism and communism could germinate and grow. It is doing more than anything else to blight our heritage of Christian culture, which integrates the various aspects of human life and renders to God the things that are God's.

The statement works out in calm and unemphasized and shatteringly expository terms the devastation quietly accomplished by secularism in the family, education, economic life and the international community, and within the individual. The entire exposition should surely receive very much wider reprinting and publicity than THE COMMONWEAL is able to give it, for secularism is "the solvent of practical religious influence in the everyday life of men and nations," and "is not indeed the most patent, but in a very true sense the most insidious hindrance to world reconstruction within the strong framework of God's natural law."

The impact of secularism in the individual is blighting, withering. It is not an enthusiastic enemy and evil, as atheistic communism which grows from it is, or other rude and belligerent and ungentlemanly errors are. "Expediency, decency and propriety are, in its code, the norms of human behavior. It blurs, if it does not blot out, the ennobling and inspiring picture of man which the Christian Gospel paints." Secularism removes moral urgency, it eliminates "the saving sense of sin . . . blights the noblest aspirations in man which Christianity has implanted and fostered. Unfortunately, many who still profess to be Christians are touched by this blight." Secularism, it clearly appears, doesn't fire the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell. It quenches charity.

> The greatest moral catastrophe of our age is the growing number of Christians who lack a sense of sin because personal responsibility to God is not a moving force in their lives. They live in God's world, quite unmindful of Him as their Creator and Redeemer. The vague consciousness of God which they may retain is impotent as a motive in daily conduct.

And it would be the highest peak of indifferentism to feel, relaxed, that the jobs to be done this year do not require the most lively and stimulating motive for our conduct, daily and all day.

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Meeting the Cominform

IT HAS BEEN drummed into our heads so hard by the campaigns of the war, and in lesser human contests spun out on our sport and other pages, that we no longer need convincing that "a good offense is the best defense." What we often don't know is how to go about it.

If I were named coach of the AFL, for instance, in its campaign to outsmart the Cominform, I should not find it easy. At the outset I should feel like berating the institution and the team for not having started active preparations long ago. Perhaps it is my obtuseness, but the announcement of the setting up of the Cominform does not seem to me to have changed anything; it is simply flaunting the existence of a well drilled group of operators who have continuously been on hand. How can anyone believe that the Comintern ever was dissolved?

But let that go. Suppose I have been suddenly called in to meet the current situation, to plan the strategy of the AFL "Deminform" to be utilized against the Cominform, primarily in Europe right now but also in Latin America, the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. One step would be to review the nature of the Cominform team and its tactical advantages. It would not do to leave out of calculations the strength deriving from strictly centralized control, unquestioning obedience to orders, conformity in ideology, prestige built up through well advertised participation in various resistance movements. And above all the solidarity which the Communists have established with the European workers, who are so much more proletarianized than our own. The fact that the Communists are able to pull crippling strikes in France and Italy in transport and other vital industries is surely an index of their strength. The one obvious weakness is that the very announced purpose of the Cominform (Communist Information)organization is to block the European recovery contemplated in the Marshall Plan.

Conceivably this would be a good point at which to begin an effective offensive. How can the AFL democratic information organization best hurl itself into that available opening? It can, as intimated by Mr. Green, exert enough pressure here in Washington to win an important rôle in the operation of the Marshall Plan at every administrative level, bottom to top. But there a difficulty arises. What of the Railway Brotherhoods, who were in on the announcement of these plans, and the CIO, which is sending its own representatives to Europe to urge support of the Plan on humanitarian rather than political grounds? The present state of the CIO, generally, would certainly point to collaboration with the AFL and the Brotherhoods on the Marshall Plan. So my first offensive move (with an eye to defense against still vociferous commie jibes about Wall Street) would be to gain an important rôle in the workings of the Marshall Plan for the AFL, in collaboration with the other major American unions.

Another move, which would certainly have to be a joint, rather than a strictly AFL, venture would be to get the European unions steamed up about the Marshall Plan. The proposed conference of the labor unions of the sixteen participating nations would certainly constitute one good method. Personal contacts between labor leaders of the respective countries is another. And anything American unions can do to help put European labor unions back on their feet could be important. So, too, the sending of food packages to needy European workers by American workers *qua* trade union members.

As part of my offensive I should do everything possible to put over at the Lima conference next January the setting up of an inter-American Federation of Labor to combat Toledano's Latin American federation that could become a real adjunct of hemisphere solidarity. But what of the WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) in which the AFL has insistently refused to participate on the logical grounds that the Russian delegates do not represent genuine labor unions. I should want to find out more about it but I have a hunch that the time has come to see what can be done about upsetting the communist influence in that organization. I seem to recall that the AFL-WFTU hostility has other facets, that only one union is allowed to represent each country in the World Federation. And the numerical basis for allotting delegates from each nation is wrong.

In my first series of moves I should want my AFL to be active not only because of the general propaganda value of its presence and initiative in a critical major situation. My team and its allied operatives from the other American unions should also use their positions of authority to protect their European fellow workers. Our democratic information services must see to it that basic workers' rights are not sacrificed in the interest of production. (I mean decent hours and working conditions, adequate pay, job security, collective bargaining.) Also to see to it that their sovereignty as citizens of their respective nations is not infringed in the attempt to carry through a multi-national productive program. The reconstruction of Europe is primarily a workers' task to be effected by means the workers themselves desire.

And there is one other plane on which I would take the offensive at every opportunity. In national and international labor congresses and before all appropriate committees of the United Nations I should continue to insist on a survey of the slave labor now existing. The AFL appears to favor most of these measures. But I would be too much of a collaborationist toward other unions for Mr. Green to take me on.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

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Over East and West

Recent efforts of Catholics and Orthodox to penetrate the Iron Curtain

Helen Iswolsky

IN SPITE of the dramatic conflicts darkening the post-war world, we find at least one field where peace making is not a utopian dream. Promoters of religious reunion have, during these years, achieved considerable progress. There is, for instance, the case of the rapprochement between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Great scholarly research in theology, patristic tradition, history and liturgy has been performed by priests, religious and laymen belonging to both churches, which helps pave the way to reconciliation. Progress has been achieved not only by erudition. It has been possible because of mutual good will and understanding. Practical work, based on sound theology and genuine human experience, is helping Catholics and Orthodox to meet in an atmosphere of brotherly intercourse and prayer, whereas formerly they would have been engaged in fruitless controversy and the statement of mutual grievances. This combined work of Christian erudition and Christian charity is known under the name of the Eirenic movement, the term deriving from the Greek word *Irene* or *Eirene,* which signifies "peace."

Among the many manifestations of the Eirenic spirit, one of the most interesting and inspiring is the Week of Prayer for Unity. This week, specially dedicated to ecumenic aims, has taken on a particularly great significance in France, where prayers and sermons on the subject of Unity have been combined with actual and direct intercourse between Christians of various faiths. In 1947, for instance, the Week of Prayer was marked in Paris by a great rally, at which more than 1,200 persons of various faiths were present. This Vigil of Unity was held in the Hall of La Mutualité, one of the city's important centers of popular and community life. The rally was simultaneously presided over by Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, by Pastor Wheatcroft, French Lutheran bishop, and by Father Rodionoff, a Russian Orthodox priest. A religious play was performed by students representing the three Christian faiths, and was followed by addresses of the three chairmen. Finally, the meeting was concluded by a common recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the entire gathering. This was not the first occasion of the Russian Orthodox in France meeting their Protestant brothers; indeed, the rapprochment between Orthodox and Protestants has been pursued for over fifty years, and has been marked by numerous meetings all over the world. And this particular ecumenic week in Paris had on its schedule a solemn celebration at the American Cathedral, which was attended by Protestant and Orthodox clergy. But the co-chairmanship of the Archbishop of Paris and of Father Rodionoff at the La Mutualité meeting may be regarded as an entirely new landmark in the history of ecumenical life. Although the Catholic Church does not participate *officially* in the World Ecumenic Movement, its representatives, priests and laymen, may attend personally and privately certain ecumenic activities.

As a sequel to the Catholic Week of Prayer for Unity, the Paris Orthodox Theological Institute organized an ecumenical day at which, once more, a number of Catholics were present as well as leaders of French Protestantism. This was an extremely impressive manifestation, especially important because the Paris Theological Institute is the most important center of Russian religious culture in Western Europe. For many years the Institute had among the members of its faculty Father Serge Boulgakoff, the famous Russian thinker and theologian. Since Father Boulgakoff's death a few years ago, the Paris Institute has continued to be a powerful stimulant of Orthodox life, thanks to its dean, Professor B. Zenkovsky, and to such eminent teachers as Father G. Florovsky and Dr. L. Zander.

The Ecumenical Day at the Institute was marked by prayers followed by a common meal and friendly discussions in which Catholics and Protestants took part. Solemn Mass was celebrated in the Greek language in honor of the Greek clergy invited to the ceremony, but the sermon was preached in French, because of the numerous French or French speaking guests. We find among the Catholics present, Monsignor Botinelli, head of the Catholic University Missions, the Rev. Christopher Dumont, director of the Dominican Study Center "Istina," Father Dalmé, representing the Dominican Abbey of Saulchoire, Father Croquizon, OSB, Father Paul Maillé, S.J., Father Louis Bouillè, an Oratorian, Father Maurice Vilain, assistant to Rev. Paul Couturier, who is the promoter of the Week of

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Prayer for Unity, and Father Lambert Baudoin, OSB, founder of the Benedictine Priory of Amay in Belgium.

Let us here recall that this last community has been working for many years on behalf of Union with great fervor, and, one may truly say, with remarkable success. It is precisely at Amay, and more recently at Chevetogne (where the Benedictine Priory has been transferred) that we find one of the most active centers of the Eirenic movement. In this case, of course, "activity" must be understood not as the manifestation of outward dynamism, but as an intense life of prayer, meditation and study, pursued in the contemplative atmosphere typical of the Benedictine Order. The Greco-Slavonic liturgy is daily celebrated by several monks of Amay-Chevetogne, who also publish a review, *Irenikon,* entirely devoted to ecumenical problems, and more specifically to the rapprochement between the Churches of East and West. Not only do a great number of Russian intellectuals read *Irenikon,* but they have often expressed their sympathy and admiration for this periodical, which reflects true Catholic culture and at the same time avoids topics which might lead to controversy, irritation and misunderstanding among Orthodox readers. The work of the fathers of Amay-Chevetogne has already been described in detail by Catholics. But it is interesting to discover what the Orthodox think about them, and such an account has recently been written by Dr. Zander, whom we have mentioned above as one of the teachers in the Paris Orthodox Institute faculty.

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Dr. Zander, who visited the Chevetogne Priory in 1947, was also a guest of the Benedictines at Amay before the war. Orthodox visitors are frequently received by the monks, and as Dr. Zander writes in his account, they enjoy full liberty and the friendly atmosphere of Benedictine hospitality. Relating his recent experience at Chevetogne, Dr. Zander frankly discusses several important aspects of the life and work he observed there. After having briefly described the Greco-Slavonic liturgy performed by the monks, he tells why he, as a rule, is not in sympathy with the adoption by Catholics of the Eastern rite. In this respect Dr. Zander is no exception. Many Orthodox share his feeling that the Eastern liturgy celebrated by Catholic priests is not "an aim in itself," but a "means" to attract the Orthodox and hasten their "conversion." However at Chevetogne, Dr. Zander felt none of these apprehensions. Here, he realized, the Eastern liturgy was an aim in itself, cherished because of its beauty and its deep religious inspiration. It was not meant to convince anyone; it had no "missionary purpose."

The only criticism expressed by Zander, if this may be called a criticism, is that the Eastern liturgy at Chevetogne has a somewhat scholarly and academic character. This, as he correctly observes, is due to the fact that the celebrants are not in contact with an organic religious tradition, but have merely succeeded in growing a "rare flower" far from its native soil. In other words, it represents laboratory work and has not the living background of a land and of a people. This, however, does not diminish the spiritual value of liturgical life. Dr. Zander acknowledges it as "an expression of love, as a desire to penetrate to the very depths of Russia's religious soul and texture, and to make it known in the West."

This work was pursued also outside the choir, when Dr. Zander met the monks of Chevetogne personally and shared their hours of study and recreation. The fathers requested him to talk to them in detail about Russian religious thought. He spoke to them extensively of Father Boulgakoff's theological works, and he found his audience well prepared to follow the intricacies of Boulgakoff's religious philosophy, drawn from the deepest sources of the Christian East and not easily accessible to the Western mind.

Another no less interesting and understanding audience gathered later at Louvain, where about forty Catholic priests and Religious from the University attended Dr. Zander's talk on ecumenical problems. This talk led to a friendly but frank discussion. However, as we learn from Dr. Zander's account, the usual points of controversy of an essentially dogmatic character did not form the center of this discussion. What was most clearly studied and analyzed was the differences in Catholic and Orthodox philosophy, which, as Dr. Zander stresses, should be more often confronted and more accurately interpreted. It is not sufficient, the author tells us, to make sweeping statements, as, for instance; "Orthodoxy is Catholicism without the Pope," or something "intermediary between Catholicism and Protestantism." After the lecturer had given the necessary explanations, his Catholic listeners exclaimed: "You have quite a different ecclesiology." This, Dr. Zander observes, caused a certain disappointment, but we feel that it was an indispensable preamble to further discussion.

Dr. Zander deplores the fact that the Catholic Church does not participate officially in the ecumenical movement. He considers this absence "tragic," but he adds that he conceives it "not as an occasion for complaints, regrets or accusations, but as a *problem*: to seek the path along which Catholic cooperation is permitted and possible." And he goes on to say: "Such paths exist. We must only know how to find them, taking into consideration what is permissible and what is not permissible for Catholics; and often the

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question is not 'what' is permissible but 'how.' That which is not possible officially in so far as representatives of the Church are concerned, is entirely permitted in some other form: private, personal (which does not mean at all secret or concealed). But for this we must often reconstruct our usual stereotoyped ideas about ecumenic intercourse. I think it would be more correct to speak here not of a movement, but of cooperation, work, intercourse; not of the Catholic Church, but of Catholic consciousness. We find the proof that such a work is possible not only in the very existence of Chevetogne, but also in this year's ecumenical student meetings, in the celebrations at St. Sergius (The Paris Orthodox Theological Institute), and in a series of other meetings." [1]

Dr. Zander tells us very frankly in his article that he is not convinced that union can be the final goal of such a cooperation. Yet he realizes the importance and value of ecumenic action. His experience with Catholics is reassuring in our eyes, as a proof that such a serious, profound and sincere intercourse has become possible. And it brings out once more a point of considerable significance: that the so-called "missionary" works performed by Catholics among the Orthodox breed suspicion and antagonism, if not complete estrangement; whereas the works of love which are "an aim in themselves" are directly understood and highly appreciated.

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We have been dealing here with what we called "laboratory work" and its inevitable limitations. If the Chevetogne monastic experiment is a "rare flower" grown on foreign soil, the Paris Orthodox Institute, with all its great achievements, is also rooted in non-Russian ground. How can we learn what the Russian people behind the Iron Curtain know or feel about the ecumenical movement of work or intercourse? Does such a work mean anything to them? How should "Catholic consciousness" be reflected there, and shall it ever be grasped, even when the Iron Curtain is raised? To the Russian masses it shall probably remain unknown for many years to come. But by separate Russian individuals it can be grasped immediately. Such a statement would not be convincing, had we not under our eyes extremely interesting and rare evidence, evidence which shows that the communion of souls, moved by the genuine forces of Christianity, is a *constant process* of which perhaps we are not sufficiently aware.

Among the Russian prisoners of war interned in Germany and later liberated by the allies, a number of Soviet soldiers have, because of their dislike or fear of the communist regime, refused to return to their native land. One of these *Nevozrastchenzy*, or "not returning ones," as they are called in Russian, is a young Red army officer, whose name is Michail Koriakoff. He has recently published a fragment of his journal pages which relates his experiences in Poland, where he was stationed during the war, and where for the first time he became familiar with the Catholic religion. Koriakoff's account is especially interesting, because the author, as we learn from his writings, went through a deep religious crisis during the war years. A former unbeliever, he became a fervent Christian. This religious experience was naturally linked with the Russian Orthodox Church. Moreover, Koriakoff knows and is attracted by that Orthodox philosophy of which Dr. Zander writes in his article: he is attached not only to the simple faith of the people, which he witnessed during the war, but also to the ideology of Dostoievsky, and to the deepest sources of Russian mysticism.

Koriakoff makes a clear distinction between the communist leaders, whom he bitterly opposes, and the Russian nation, with its historical and cultural tradition. Orthodox religious trends inspire most of his thought and work. Koriakoff's impressions in Poland are extremely valuable because in spite of his Orthodoxy, deeply traditional, he seems to have approached with a completely unbiased mind problems which have so tragically and for so many centuries divided the Orthodox Russians and the Catholic Poles. The fragment of his journal relating this experience is entitled "The Church of Panna Maria," which is the Polish name for Our Lady. Being stationed in the vicinity of a Catholic church, the young Red Army Officer often entered it for prayer and meditation and found in "Panna Maria's" shrine the spiritual help expressed in the inscription he read above her altar: *"Consolatrix."*

Koriakoff, brought up in the communist world of materialism and atheism, turned to the Christian faith without being informed in detail about the dogmatic and theological background of religion. But he knew enough about Russian historical and spiritual traditions to write in his journal about the Slavophile resentment of Latin trends: Poland, he recalls in his journal, was, according to Slavophile ideology, "a transformation of slavism through Latin education," and had become "a competitor of Greek and Eastern slavism," that is, of "the Danubian tribes, of Moscow and of Ruthenia." However, the young Red Army officer rejects this religious and national exclusiveness. He writes in his journal:

> The war has broken down the wall between nations. Far away vistas opened before us, stretching to the

1. Quoted by the courtesy of Dr. Zander and *The Church Life Journal*, published by the Russian Christian Student Movement. Paris, July 1947. Mimeographed edition, not for sale.

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> ends of the world. There was much we began to see with different eyes. Poland lay on my path and I saw how beautiful and closely related to us is that country . . . Slavism . . . Latinism . . . Orthodoxy . . . Catholicism . . . What do I care about these contradictions? I knew nothing of dogmatics, neither Orthodox nor Catholic. I knew nothing of ritualism. I experienced in my own self an overflowing religious force which took hold of my entire being. This force was inherent to the simple and direct religious feelings of the people. Everywhere, in Poland as well as in Russia, the people know God, and not the dogmatics of theology. In Orthodox Volynia, as well as in Catholic Poland, the peasantwomen wearing their bright Sunday clothes would go to Church, to pray God, and would then come home in a joyous, festive mood, to serve the Sunday meal. I do not care whether I pray in an Orthodox or Catholic Church. Not far from the camp where our officers reserve was stationed lay the Polish village of Demba. I used to go there furtively to visit the church. I entered silently, trying to step lightly with my heavy boots on the stone floor; I sat down in one of the pews, and, like all the others who were present, I bent down, pressing my face on my palms. I remained thus motionless for a long time, listening to that which was going on in me, and praying not with words but with every drop of my blood. I am here, all of me, I give myself up into your hands, oh Lord, instruct me, tell me what to do, fortify my faith.[2]

Indeed such an act of faith raises a soul above the contradictions of Latinism and Orthodoxy. It is not troubled by these two different forms of devotion, piety, national tradition; by all this variety of rite and custom, which for many a sincere promoter of Union places an insurmountable barrier between East and West. Koriakoff does not ignore these differences, but he discovers an approach to them, by realizing that the two religious worlds do not exclude but complete each other. He writes:

> Orthodox liturgy, as I witnessed it in Volynia, in the Cathedral of Lutzk, impressed me with its epic grandeur, with the spirit of ancient, legendary Russia. There is no epic spirit in Catholic low Masses. We find in them more of the lyrical strain, the concentration of the faithful in himself, when man bows his head, presses his face on his palms, when he renounces all that is earthly and enters a world of entirely different dimensions. This was at that time more in accordance with the state of my own soul. Without bothering about the 'poisonous sting of Latinism,' my sympathies went to Catholicism.

These lines must not be interpreted as a definite leaning towards Catholicism on the part of the author; they simply prove that in the state of Christian fervor and true prayer which he had attained there was room in his soul for the entire wealth of the liturgy, expressing in its various aspects the manifold scale of religious feeling.

Neither should we seek in the experience of one man, kneeling at the feet of the *Consolatrix*, and witnessing the "epic grandeur" of the Eastern liturgy, the solution of the intricate problems raised by the reunion of the Churches. But what is important is the testimony about the walls having been broken down, about the great vistas opening before a new generation of Christians; for them the old conflict between "latinism" and "slavism" has become academic in form and obsolete in spirit. There is much of the past that we may regret, but wars and social catastrophes also sweep away oldtime prejudices and futile topics of controversy. Memory, as the mystics teach us, may also offer temptation if it stirs old grievances and resentments. The contradictions between East and West, have, no doubt, their roots in historical and national realities. But they have grown disproportionately in the minds of men, shutting doors and raising walls until all vistas of the true spiritual world were hidden. Such a complete religious differentiation has not only become academic; it has developed into a bad habit. A man like Koriakoff knows enough about these controversies to speak of them in detached and even contemptuous terms. For him, what is essential is the "simple and direct religious feeling of the people," the conviction that they know God, and that he too knows Him. The author gives us to understand in his journal that this knowledge has come to him through great tribulations and suffering. This is, surely, the way followed by most of this new Christian generation, both in the East and in the West. Walls are broken down and, on each side of the barrier, hearts are warmed and are awakening to a new understanding of their fellowmen. The Paris ecumenical meetings, the friendly intercourse between an Orthodox scholar and the monks of Chevetogne, Koriakoff's new approach to Slavonic and Latin religious tradition, all point the same way: the task of reunion is not to be pursued through theory alone. It must become a living experience, and it must be above all, in Dr. Zander's words, an "expression of love."

2. These lines and the following are quoted by courtesy of *The New Journal.* Number XVI, 1947.

Secularism holds out no valid promise of better things for our country, or for the world. During our own lives it has been the bridge between a decaying devotion to Christian culture and the revolutionary forces which have brought on what is perhaps the gravest crisis in all history. The tragic evil is not that our Christian culture is no longer capable of producing peace and reasonable prosperity, but that we are allowing secularism to divorce Christian truth from life. The fact of God and the fact of the responsibility of men and nations to God for their actions are supreme realities.

N.C.W.C. Bishop's Statement of November 15.

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Co-ops and Small Business

Richard Giles

QUEBEC: The fear of what the co-ops may do to small business has been exploited with crude vigor by the National Tax Equality Association in the States, and by a similar organization in Canada, called the Income Tax Payers' Association. Other groups flying the banner of small business are joining the attack. Fantastic statements are being made about the amount of taxes that would be forthcoming if the co-ops' non-profit operation could somehow be called something else. There is a new Dominion tax law under which a small nuisance tax is levied against co-ops, based on no particular logic. But the law does not go to the extreme of taxing patronage refunds. Small business men are paying good money to get laws like this passed, presumably because they have been scared.

Here in Quebec there are developments that make you wonder whether the co-op people or the small business people have given enough attention to their common problems. There is a provincial co-op council, *le Conseil Supérieur de la Cooperation,* which includes in its membership a startling assortment of types of co-op: among them a taximen's co-op in the city of Quebec, forty fishermen's co-ops in the Gaspé, thirty lumbering and forestry co-ops, and the *Caboteurs Unis,* a group of freight boat operators.

Quite a few of the men in these co-ops have a right to consider themselves small business men. Whether you own a boat or a taxicab, you are in business. And there is a six-story cooperative garage in Montreal, a true co-op, to which belong a majority of the milk dealers and physicians in town; its president is also president of the city board of trade.

These dignitaries are not the only members of the Superior Council, of course. They share membership with 475 agricultural co-ops, marketing and purchasing; 200 consumer co-op stores; seven life insurance mutuals, which, just as in the United States, are the oldest co-op form and on a restricted local scale are perfectly democratic; the Catholic farmers' union; the Catholic workers' confederation and many other groups.

Now there is nothing new, it must be pointed out, in the idea of businessmen organizing co-ops to serve themselves; the voluntary chains of independent grocers and druggists, the cooperatively-run credit bureaus in many cities, even the common use of pipe-lines by competing oil companies suggest that when cooperation serves a purpose, businessmen will use it. The new element in the Superior Council of Quebec is the fact that farmers, businessmen, workers and consumers have joined in one organization. We are all consumers, the co-op people like to say, and in Quebec the point seems to be confirmed.

Even more than the Council, however, the *caisses populaires* show what a powerful force co-ops may be for bringing people together. These indigenous credit unions—the birthplace of credit unions in the North American continent is Levis, Quebec—have grown more rapidly in the last few years than any other sector of the cooperative movement. In 1939, there were 500 *caisses populaires,* with 100,000 members and $20,000,000 assets. Today there are 1,020, with 500,000 members and $190,000,000 in assets. The growth of 400 percent in membership means that one person in seven is now a credit union member. (Children are commonly members, so the membership must be compared with population.)

The *caisses populaires* are organized in what is one of the most stable social areas on the continent. They take as the basis of their organization the most stable of social units, the parish. Only ten of the credit unions in the province are organized along industrial or occupational lines, the formula commonly used in the States. During the war period, when the mobility of the working population in the States resulted in numerous credit union liquidations, there were no liquidations in Quebec, and there was a gain in the number of societies of 100 percent. Fewer than four hundred parishes in the province remain without credit union facilities.

This tremendous wartime gain is based quite frankly to wartime prosperity. Money flowed into the province during the war in unprecedented quantities. The thrifty French-Canadians made money and saved it. There was a substantial shift of population to the cities, and higher money income, especially Montreal, so that today the province is no longer predominantly rural and one out of every three persons lives in Montreal. Farm incomes rose too, even though Quebec is a stronghold of the family farm. Forest products, of course, produced a considerable proportion of the rural population's winter earnings.

The *caisses populaires* hold at the moment about $50,000,000 of mortgages on farms and homes at 5 percent. They have loaned in addition about $20,000,000 in small loans at 6 percent. The rest of their assets is invested mainly in debentures and government bonds.

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There are about 70,000 borrowers on the books, so that the average loan is about $1,000. It might also be pointed out that 70,000 borrowers out of 500,000 members is a strikingly small proportion, which serves to show how important the *caisses populaires* are as institutions for savings.

Now membership in a *caisse populaire* is open to anyone in the parish, and in practice a wide variety of people join. Small shopkeepers are as likely to join as anybody else, and do. The respectable conservatism that people develop as they handle money can be noticed in most credit unions. This, the varied membership, the support of the Church, and the relative antiquity of the credit union movement in Quebec all help account for the fact that the idea of people's banks is accepted without protest, even among bankers. The more doctrinaire of the consumer co-op crowd will sometimes scoff at the credit unions a little, for their conservatism, but it is not easy to scoff at a group of co-ops with 500,000 members out of a 3,000,000 population.

A vague uneasiness about the doctrinaire co-operators expresses itself from time to time. One co-op official said to me, "My father is a merchant. He has a general store in a small village with 2,000 population. There are four or five stores in the village. My sisters work in the store, and I have a brother, too, who works there. At the end of the year there is a surplus from the operations, but it is small. My father pays my sisters and brother no salary. Some people would say there should be a co-op there. But if there were a co-op, you would have to pay the manager a salary of perhaps $2,000 a year. He would have an assistant or two, and they would have to be paid. How can a co-op work in such a place?"

We agreed that co-ops should be set up only where there is a definite need for them. After all, the agricultural co-ops could point to a hundred dollar reduction in the price of milking machines, a $17 drop in the price of feed, an $8 cut in the price of fertilizer. There are plenty of opportunities for co-ops.

"But," I said, "I object very much to the idea that there is nothing good in private business. Your father may very well be serving the community better than an ill trained co-op manager would. Let me tell you something about the Swedish co-ops: The Swedish cooperative wholesaler is in the cash register business. It has cut the price of cash registers substantially. There is a co-op cash register assembly plant in Stockholm. But the cash register parts that are assembled to make the finished product are not made in co-op factories. They are made on contract by small businessmen in various parts of the country. I have asked the question, whether the co-ops do not hope some day to buy out all these little factories and operate them cooperatively. The answer I got was, no. The people at the co-op wholesale feel satisfied that they get better results by encouraging small manufacturers to compete for the business. Incidentally, the number of small businesses in Sweden is steadily increasing.

"There is another way in which co-ops can cooperate with small business," I continued. "One of the co-op wholesales in the States has a coffee roasting plant which operates only 20 percent of the time. If it could be operated 100 percent of the time it would be a more economic operation and the price of co-op coffee could be lowered. The management has discussed the possibility of roasting coffee for private dealers, and it seems perfectly reasonable to invite a retailer owned cooperative to share in the plant's operations. Anything that makes the independent grocer a better competitor is in the public interest and should be acceptable co-op practice."

"As a matter of fact," my Quebec friend said, "there is something like that here in Quebec. There is a cooperative hatchery for baby chicks, called *le Cooperative Avicole*, which produces chicks for co-ops and private dealers. So far as I know, it works all right."

Attacks carried on in the name of small business usually give themselves away. The argument goes, "Co-ops are all right as long as they stick to a small local operation, but they exceed their function when they go into production, buy refineries, drill for oil, lay pipe-line and so on." In other words, co-ops are all right as long as they compete with small business, but not when they compete with big business.

What the real relationship of co-ops to small business is, nobody knows. It seems to have been proved that a community of family farms is better for small business than a community of corporate farms, and the co-op is obviously good for the family farm. But the possibility of mutual helpfulness between co-ops and small business has not, so far as I know, been much explored. It seems worth thinking about, and particularly before making paralyzing laws against cooperatives.

No Conversation*

MAX PICARD

IN THIS disjointed world there can be no conversation between individuals; no dialogue exists, for each one talks to himself after the fashion of monologists. Monology, which even in discussion addresses primarily the self, signifies that one knows nothing of the partner, that one attaches no importance to his presence; it

* From "Hitler In Our Selves," by Max Picard. Henry Regnery Co. Distributed by Devin-Adair Co., New York.

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signifies lack of love. Monology and deficiency of love correspond to one another.

By noisiness and shoutings, pretense is made that one is talking to others and not to one's self.

Long before Hitler, genuine discussion between persons no longer existed, either in the field of politics or in the meetings of scientists and artists. The speeches in parliament were monologues; anybody who made a speech strangely resembled a pupil who all by himself recites aloud some piece he wants to memorize; nobody listened to him but himself; it was a monologue. And it was the same with the speeches of scientists and artists.

This monology was still more augmented through Hitler. Never did any of his speeches call for an answer. His speeches were nothing but monologues, enormous accumulations of monologic cries; these colossal cry-monuments of Hitlerian speeches towered over the people and overwhelmed them in the same manner that a colossal stone monument overwhelms no matter whether it be beautiful or ugly; for the colossal, as it towers in isolation over a plain, is effective as such.

"That is the most miserable manner by which nations decay in their civic life: the people fall into the bestial habit of thinking of nothing but their own specific needs; they fall into extreme touchiness or rather into extreme arrogance like wild beasts which jump and go crazy at the mere touch of one hair. And as in numbers they increase and in body are heaped together, they live as horrible beasts in utter desolation of soul and everyone by his own will, since not two are of the same mind because each pursues but his own pleasures and whims." (Vico, La Scienza Nuova.)

In the world of continuity, by way of contrast, the partner, he who is addressed, is forever with him who speaks; moreover, conversation continues silently even as the partners are mute.

Take the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller: the letter to the friend is never finished, even when it reaches its end; silently the word continues to go out toward the partner; those letters are nothing but part manifestations of a heart-to-heart talk which goes on in silence.

On the other hand, take a letter from somebody who lives in the world of discontinuity: such a letter is finished as its end is reached; nothing else emanates from it, not even to the addressee; the contents just barely suffice to fill the small space of the paper; the writer really wrote it to himself; it is nothing more than a monologue.

With people who lived in the world of continuity, it was as if their words did not begin with their author but as if he merely continued them, as if they were handed to him by another. It was just as with the motions of construction workers who are passing along the bricks from the ground up to the roof, as if all those hands together were but one road for the bricks to travel.

The words of those people were but the audible part of a conversation which came from afar and went on afar; people who had lived in bygone ages participated in the conversation, and if one partner hesitated at some word, it was as if he wished to listen for the voice of the past or for that of the future.

★

It is not so in the world of discontinuity, where the past generation is only the warehouse for some historical inventory from which one collects what decorates the moment. In the world of continuity the past generations still participate in the present; it is not that one could deal with them as one pleases; it is they who are dealing with us. To quote one example from ancient Rome for this continuity of generations:

"There followed the strangest and the most magnificent part of the rites, the procession of the forebears . . . As was said before, the masks of forebears who had distinguished themselves in office were the pride of the [Roman] house; they were cast in wax, were painted and then exhibited in wooden shrines along the walls of the family hall. When death occurred in the family, suitable persons, mostly actors, were chosen to don these masks, and garments of office to match, for the funeral procession; thus, in their carriages, the forebears gave last escort to the dead. As the procession reached the market place, the body of the dead was raised up; the forebears descended from their carriages and sat down in the seats of the judges. To the solemnity of Roman life . . . it was benefiting that the past generations should continue to dwell among the living as if in body, that if in the fulness of toil and of honor a citizen was gathered to his fathers, those fathers themselves should appear on the market to receive him into their midst." (Mommsen, Roman History.)

Just how much the presence of past generations is still being felt can be seen even today in the Swiss canton of Tessin: there, as the bishop inspects the diocese, his first call in any village is upon the past generations, upon the dead as they rest in the cemetery; so the dead, too, are present and are with the living as the bishop dwells in the village.

At night, as the express trains roar past small stations, they resemble giant tubes rolling along, dark and shut off; but at one time or another such a train comes to a stop and then the curtains go open inside, light pours out, and faces appear in the windows. So it is with our predecessors in the world of continuity; they are like the lit-up, the visible, parts of an enormously long and darkened train.

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Communications

WARREN OF CALIFORNIA

San Francisco, Cal.

TO the Editors: The Democrats of California through the office of the State Central Committee are surprised and chagrined that the editors of such a responsible Catholic periodical as THE COMMONWEAL should be so out of touch with the political situation in the second largest state in the Union as to condescend to publish the irresponsible letter of Thomas R. Lynch of Los Angeles which appeared in THE COMMONWEAL of October 31st, 1947.

If the editors of THE COMMONWEAL are so naive as to imagine that "the pals of Stalin and Tito are the leading Democrats of California" we must of necessity conclude that THE COMMONWEAL is a very fragile and inadequate reed supporting the American Anti-Comintern Front. Before publishing this unconscionable attack on the integrity of the Democrats of California the editors should at least have had the courtesy to contact by telegram or otherwise the "leading Democrats of California," many of whom are practical Catholics and the majority of whom (no matter what their religious affiliation) have subscribed *"in praxi"* to the principles of the *"Divini Redemptoris"* of Pius the Eleventh.

It would indeed be a sad day when Stalin and Tito, through the machinations of their fellow-travelers, could quote THE COMMONWEAL to the effect that this liberal Catholic weekly stated on October 31st, 1947, that the Fourth International had "captured" the leading Democrats of California.

The members of the California Democratic State Central Committee, fully one half of them weaned on the *"philosophia perennis"* and having at their right hand the plurality of the registered voters in the commonwealth, wish by these presents to reassure the editors of THE COMMONWEAL that they are ready, panoplied and aware, to smite the Philistines on every beachhead along our far-flung golden strand.

JOHN P. MCENERY
Democratic State Central Committee

Los Angeles, Cal.

TO the Editors: As a subscriber and reader of THE COMMONWEAL, as well as being Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee of California, may I say that I concur completely with the letter written to you by our able Vice Chairman, Mr. John P. McEnery, relative to your recent published comments from Thomas R. Lynch. JAMES ROOSEVELT.

Some of our best friends are leading California Democrats.—THE EDITORS.

TRAVEL DIARY

TO the Editors: "France Forever" was delightful to read not only because of Anne Fremantle's habitual talent but for the sake of what it disclosed to the mind of a French-born reader. I felt as if the French were "at it again." I mean their hospitality trick. It is not only that it is the privilege of the French born to come back from a visit to France bloated with months of gray noodles washed down with ersatz coffee. It may well be that Anne Fremantle's friends had about the same fare whether they entertained her or not. They probably have, as many other French people do. That I did not meet them does not prove anything. But this physical aspect of things is interesting because it seems to have its replica in other spheres. The privilege of the French born is also to hear the whole truth, from the French, and nothing but the truth. Whereas other people may hear the truth. Only. It is a centuries old habit with the French. Partly a matter of manners—to say anything, in a conversation with a foreigner, which will make for a pleasant, lively talk, even with a bit of contradiction, but nothing that will deal with basic attitudes. However these manners have their root in a firm conviction—that no one but the French can face things as they are and yet not despair. Of course there are exceptions, and, likely Anne Fremantle might be one. The exception which confirms the rule. But long experience has taught the French that it is better to stick to the rule with foreigners even if they are intimate friends.

So the French tell Anne Fremantle that "a good average salary is 3000 frs." And they tell me, and it did check, that it is 6000 frs because they expect me to picture about rightly what sort of living conditions this can meet—the scantiest. No fuel, no clothes.

They tell Anne Fremantle that "everywhere the German prisoners are received *en famille*." And they tell me that in some places they are, and in other places their treatment has been a disgrace to the nation. And a survey in *Témoignage Chrétien* confirms this.

They tell Anne Fremantle that the "Germans could have had the French on their side, had it not been for their civilians." And they tell me that the Germans could have had the French on their side had they not been so diabolically hypocritical. Everywhere I heard the same story: "It is their hypocrisy we could not stand." Now the notion of hypocrisy is a ticklish business. And only two French people talking to each other have the same concept of it. So instinctively no one mentions it to an outsider.

The Frenchman tells Anne Fremantle that he longed to see London "because of Amber." The French people tell me: "That book, Amber, it is dirty without being interesting. Always the same thing. Over and over again. No, really, those people, they have no imagination."

So "France Forever" is the truth, but not quite in the state she is supposed to get out of the well. And it must be that I am no longer entirely French if I venture here to introduce her, to my fellow Americans, unadorned.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

Quebec, Canada.

TO the Editors: Mrs. Fremantle writes in *The Brighter Side* in THE COMMONWEAL (Oct. 24, 1947), ". . . Canada is importing White Protestants as fast as she can into Quebec to try and meet the tide of French Catholic births!"

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Canada is importing White Protestants as fast as she can, true; into Quebec, hardly (into Ontario, very true); to try and meet the tide of French Catholic births, quite obviously.

The plan is nefarious enough but not just the way Mrs. Fremantle described it in her excellent article.

The Rev. FRANÇOIS J. LALLY.

PARCELS TO ENGLAND

Petersfield, England.

TO the Editors: I am rather shaken by the sight, in your issue of October 17, of Altman's advertisement of food parcels for England right beside Mr. Gurian's letter about parcels for Germany. We in Great Britain are certainly in a tight spot. Living is hard, and in particular the housewife continues to have one hell of a time. But if small, our rations are at least sure, and (unless one has not got the money to pay for them) there is no need for anybody to go hungry. In parts of Germany and other continental countries this is certainly not so.

May I therefore take the liberty of suggesting to your readers that they should direct their generousity to those countries rather than to Great Britain. Their need is greater than ours. (Of course I am not referring to known individual cases of real hardship in this country. Nor do I want to knock Altman's ad—no doubt they will gladly supply parcels for anywhere).

DONALD ATTWATER.

A GERMAN MEMORIAL

Sunnyside, Wash.

TO the Editors: I think the following is an interesting piece of news following up my last article on Germany in which I related the death of three priests and one Lutheran minister on the scaffold. They were executed by the Nazis for the treasonable crime of spreading Cardinal Galen's pastoral letters in the armed forces of Hitler (1944).

Efforts have been made to obtain their ashes (their bodies were cremated, it seems). The ashes of one priest were transferred to Leer, his home town, and solemnly buried after a white, not a funeral, Mass. The other priests' remains could not be found. The Lutheran minister also received a solemn church funeral.

Today, November 9, 1947, on the eve of the third anniversary, Catholics and Protestants are holding a common vesper service at St. Catherine's Church, a pre-Reformation church, which, by the way, contains some master works of Ernest Barlach and has been in Protestant hands for over 400 years. Catholics now use this church again, at alternating hours, with their separated brethren. The Protestant orchestra (sic) and choir will furnish the music, a priest and a minister will read Scriptural texts. Tomorrow, November 10, at 6 P. M. in the evening, there will be a solemn High Mass in white at the hour of death of these men whom many regard as martyrs. My correspondent adds a little sadly that it needed lay pressure to do all this as others seem to be inclined to commit the fate of these four men to oblivion by silence. It is not without danger to honor heroes of the cause of justice and truth around Lubeck.

By the way: the only protest against the removal of a memorial plaque on one of the fine old city gates of Lubeck, which the Nazis had placed there to honor a World War I spy executed by the British (a fact, I personally remember, as something most of us found odd and typically Nazi), came from the British commandant of Lubeck.

There is one thing only for which I personally envy the Lubeckers: evening Mass! H. A. REINHOLD.

"I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Just a word about David Marshall's review of *I Distinctly Remember*. I agree heartily with the idea that the entire past culminates in "today"; I must, however, take exception to his statement that that idea is "Hearst-invented." I hold no brief for Mr. Hearst; indeed, I have found myself, over a long period of years, consistently opposed to almost everything he has advocated, consistently in favor of most (though to be sure not all) of the things he has opposed. But Mr. Marshall's oversimplified statement simply is not true.

That idea—that the past culminates in a happy "today," or as sometimes interpreted, in "me," whoever the speaker may be—may well be a normal human oversimplification, as old as man; we haven't enough evidence to make so wide a claim, but certainly there is evidence enough that it is a common human fallacy. It reached just about its peak for the English-speaking world, however, in the pronouncements of Victorian Liberalism, both in England and America. I will not multiply instances, but cite one only: Any reader familiar with Macaulay's "History of England," and indeed with the collected works of that famous spokesman, will recognize what I mean: a simple, sublime, and completely unconscious faith that the whole of history had operated, like a vast and unfailing machine, to produce the eloquent Mr. Macaulay (or, perhaps, the elegant Mr. Disraeli) on the intellectual plane, and/or the efficient if not quite human Mr. Gradgrind in the business world. The Pyramids and the Parthenon culminated in—the Albert Memorial!

No; sorry, Mr. Marshall; Mr. Hearst not only may be, but is, a victim of the fallacy—but, in all fairness, he didn't originate it. W. G. GAFFNEY.

"THE HERETICS"

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: The review of "The Heretics" by Humphrey Slater in your issue of November 7, written by C. G. Paulding, contains a powerful statement of Christian truth. Mr. Paulding has stated eloquently the deepest convictions held but seldom expressed—and never so well—by all men of good will. "I reject coercion . . . as permissible means to save the Christian Faith at any age, at any time." These are indeed golden words and if officially authoritative Catholic voices could but be induced to proclaim them what inestimable benefits would accrue to us all in these times.

WILLIAM O'MEARA.

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The Screen

Greeks Had a Word

FAR BE IT from me to disparage any efforts that anyone may make to raise the standards of movies either morally or artistically. I am sure that The Theatre Guild, RKO, Producer-director Dudley Nichols and everyone else connected with the film version of *"Mourning Becomes Electra"* had the most praiseworthy intentions, and for their intentions I should like to add my praise. But now Eugene O'Neill's drama, considered by many critics as *the* great American play, must be judged as a movie; and as such I am afraid it falls short of the good cinema found in hundreds of films that have less intelligent themes.

That Dudlley Nichols, who also wrote the script, thought he should be faithful to O'Neill's masterpiece, is understandable O'Neill had successfully applied modern psychology to themes from Greek tragedy set in post-Civil-War New England. A strong sense of Fate pervades the plot that seems unusually complicated as the brother and sister, after avenging their father's death by killing their mother's lover, realize they cannot escape the justice they were so quick in administering to others. Actually this plot is not complicated at all; and in O'Neill's beautiful prose its arguments are presented with great clarity. But perhaps Nichols should not have stuck so closely to O'Neill's original work which was designed for the stage; while retaining O'Neill's story and ideas, the scriptwriter might have used more of a cinema technique and depended more on camera than on spoken word. As a film, "Mourning Becomes Electra" is static and talky. Except for the scene in which Lavinia and her brother kill Adam Brant on his ship, the camera hardly moves from the Mannon house and grounds. As in Greek tragedies, the main action takes place "off stage" and we are told what happened; this technique, inappropriate to motion pictures, makes this a filmed play. The film version of "Henry V," especially during the effective scenes laid in France, showed how a talky play could be made into a moving movie.

It must be said to the credit of Director Nichols and his splendid cast that "Mourning" does succeed in taking on action through its acting. In a series of scenes, several of which are almost like tableaux, these actors, although using a style not familiar to movies, set a high standard for movie portrayals as they convey the tragedy, the atmosphere of death and hate that are inescapably united with the Mannon family. I particularly liked the stirring performances of Rosalind Russell as Lavinia who takes justice into her own hands, who goads her brother into commiting murder and who, at the end, asks no forgiveness from God or anybody as she condemns herself to a solitary life in the Mannon house—"a worse act of justice than death or prison"; Michael Redgrave as her brother Orin whose strong attachment to his mother is later transferred to Lavinia and whose guilt complex forces him to cry for confession (a little psychiatry would have helped him after his return from the war, as it might have helped all of the Mannons); Katina Paxinou as the foreigner in the Mannon house, the mother of this strange pair, who kills her husband hoping to find happiness with a lover who ironically enough is also a Mannon. As Ezra Mannon, the husband and father, Raymond Massey is a bit too hammy for my tastes; but his role is the least convincing in the whole play. Leo Genn, Kirk Douglas, Henry Hull and Nancy Coleman give excellent support in smaller roles that add to the story's effectiveness.

In spite of the fact that I found "Mourning Becomes Electra" lacking as a movie, I was fascinated by the film, and my attention was held during its extraordinary length (almost three hours). Anyone familiar with the play will be interested in Nichol's sagacious editing of O'Neill's original, which is actually three plays. And those in the audience who are approaching "Mourning" for the first time will be surprised to see the material for a thriller without the action of a thriller; but they will have no difficulty in appreciating O'Neill's high position in American literature or this meritorious, though uncinematic, production.

PHILIIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Labor Movement

The Meaning of the UAW Victory

IT IS ALMOST impossible to exaggerate the importance of the sweeping victory won by Walter Reuther at the convention of the United Auto Workers, CIO, in Atlantic City. To begin with, it was the most decisive and substantial triumph scored by anti-Communist forces in the CIO since the founding of that organization. It marks a new low for red strength in the American labor movement and should pave the way for newer and lower lows. It will affect in a profound way the future of the whole CIO.

To understand it fully, you should know something about the situation existing prior to November 10, when the 2,000 delegates, representing about 800,000 members, first gathered on the boardwalk. Reuther was president, having ousted R. J. Thomas by a mere 124 votes at the last convention. He had been unable, however, to prevent Thomas from being elected first vice-president and another opponent, Richard Leonard, from grabbing the second vice-presidency. He was too weak even to run a man against the powerful secretary-treasurer, George F. Addes. He wound up with seven supporters on an executive board of 22. In short, he was in for a bad year-and-a-half.

As far as we know, neither Thomas, Addes nor Leonard is a Communist. Nevertheless, they have snuggled closer and closer to the Party over the past few years, echoed the Party slogans more and more eagerly, hired the Party hacks more and more regularly. Reuther, on the other hand, was strongly anti-CP, strongly progressive and as full of energy as a balloon is full of air. He had a bad year-and-a-half, but he did not despair. He kept plugging. He also had the eager support of the Socialists, the Social Democrats, the Schactmanite Trotskyites (as opposed to the Cannonite Trotskyites, who supported the Addes faction, for very complicated reasons), the ACTU (Association of Catholic Trade Unionists), whose Detroit chapter puts out a lively and influential weekly called *The Wage Earner* and just about all of those members who were tired of seeing their leaders play footsie with the Stalinists.

As a result, when the delegates gathered this year, the Reuther camp claimed exactly 4,516 votes, allowing Addes about 2,500 and a few hundred doubtful. It was a remarkably accurate estimate. The bandwagon started to roll, the doubtfuls climbed aboard and on the first crucial test Emil Mazey, a lively Socialist from Detroit, defeated Addes for the key job of secretary- treasurer by 4,833 to 2,599. Reuther meanwhile had walked in easily with 5,593 votes to 304 for a Stalinist unknown from Cleveland and 35 for an independent unknown from Detroit.

Then the bandwagon really began to roll. Thomas crashed headlong, losing to Richard Gosser of Toledo by 5,053 to 2,025 (unofficial). John Livingston, Reutherite form St. Louis, had it even easier, his opposition splitting between Leonard (1,579) and Shelton Tappes, a Negro CP from the big Ford local, who polled 508, while Livingston was winning with 4,921 (also unofficial). In other words, the Stalinists deserted Leonard, although Leonard had been their playmate for so long, which should be some kind of a lesson for fellow-travelers. Another interesting footnote on this contest, incidentally, is that a large majority of the Negro delegates stuck with the Reuther candidate, which indicates how soundly and well he has built his movement.

The next day Reuther continued the parade by winning a solid majority of the executive board. For the first time since its founding the UAW had a strong leader who enjoyed strong support among both the leadership and the membership. This is something new and will influence the future course of the CIO for the following reasons.

Communist unions in the CIO never controlled more than one quarter of the membership. Nevertheless, their superior zeal, discipline and prowess in public speaking made them more influential, more dangerous than those figures would indicate. This was particularly true because many of the non-Communist unions, such as the UAW, were either dominated by, or had strong neutralizing minorities composed of united front outfits like the Addes-Thomas-Leonard faction.

In short, if they had been able to establish solid control over the UAW, the CP's in the CIO would have been in a splendid position to go after the national headquarters of the CIO, first ousting Secretary Jim Carey, and then, if Phil Murray refused to go along, the venerable president himself.

Now, for the first time, this possibility has become remote, to put it mildly. The result is that anti-Communist forces in the CIO, from Washington headquarters right down through every local where the fight still goes on, have received a marvelous shot in the arm. For the first time they feel the major weight of the CIO really solid, strong and comforting behind them.

Another thing. Reuther is an ex-Socialist who has made a name for himself by his insistence that the area of collective bargaining should include prices and profits and that labor should be recognized as an equal partner with management and government in the major policy-making of industry. (This, incidentally, is also the Catholic position in such matters, though few seem to realize it.) His prestige tremendously enhanced, Reuther, with Socialist Mazey behind him, is now in a spot where he can push the CIO further toward that kind of economic democracy without at the same time allowing anybody to confuse the issue with cries of "Communism." (They will confuse it with cries of "Socialism," but that can't be helped.)

In a word, the future looks interesting, and pleasanter.

JOHN C. CORT.

Books of the Week

East Side, West Side. Marcia Davenport. Scribner. $3.00.

WHAT Marcia Davenport has to say about New York is not considerably more than one finds in the song from which her title is taken. East side and west supply the ready reference of legend, but the folklore of this particular fiction is nationally applicable. "East Side, West Side" projects its message, its wide-awake dream, to the American woman at large. The burden, intricately arrived at, is a delicate nihilism. The book's women are grimly dedicated to the reflection that

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"marriage in general held a great deal to be regretted." The heroine's pattern of regret is one of rejection in the grand manner: the wayward husband is dutifully treated to virtuous silence; the lover is taken, again righteously, after he proves himself as symbol (here he is "profound") and then surrendered, but victoriously; the husband is spurned. Nothingness: sweet, palpable, complete.

One appreciates the formidable job facing the novelist. Almost everybody other than heroine Jessie Bourne (an unconscious pun on "end" here?) must be shown to be inane and vicious. Her young sister-in-law's affair with a gangster is a "dreadful little mess"; so are the amorous, animal pastimes of the others. But for Jessie (who was contented with a negative nothingness until she met Brigadier General Mark Dwyer of the profound and knowing eyes) all must be clear and fine. A pretty problem. One of the chief ingredients of the solution is Jessie's groping, dawning realization that she and Mark are "People." That's it, you see. The others, with their stiff formalities and dull, bootless night clubbing simply are not People. Carefully, elaborately, Jessie and Mark display their common touch. They go together to *two* neighborhood grocery stores, show ecstatic delight over highly seasoned food, beam unreservedly at women in shawls. Only then can Jessie spend the night with Mark, her psyche serene, her righteousness inviolate.

The technical key to the novelist's problem is a simple one. Merely invade the consciousness of a character you approve (make him the Viewpoint Character, as the textbooks say) and remain coldly external to the rest. One gets nearly four hundred pages of Jessie's mind, softly summoned by feeling; she becomes the known center, the pattern, the censor. The unsettling thing, though, is that she is rather more than she seems; rich, idle Mrs. Brandon Bourne was once an East Side slum child. Mark is not what he seems either; downtrodden Czech with an Irish stepfather, he spent the war wearing one disguise after another; for Jessie he is father, brother, lover. The hugest escape mechanism of all is the plot, which turns suddenly into lurid melodrama after jogging luxuriously along as an exercise in sentimental realism. One of Brandon's set stumbles into a killing, fumbles his fingerprints all over the place. Jessie's amusing friends (just to prove Brandon's final incompetence) save the situation from "public slobbery" by an incredible patchwork of lying, cheating, and betraying.

All this business sprawls over a crowded week, except for the time accounted for by flashback. An enormous sensitivity has gone into it, but the whole has the special falseness of a set of figures whose individual components are true but which have been added awry. But the carmine fingers will swoop down hungrily on bookshelves and tables, and Hollywood will cock a bland and empty eye.

RILEY HUGHES.

The Language of Faith. Naham N. Glatzer, Editor. $1.50.
Galut. Yitzhak F. Baer. $1.50.
From the Land of Sheba. S. D. Goitein. Editor. $1.50.
The Rabbi of Bacherach. Heinrich Heine. $1.50.
An Autobiography. Solomon Maimon. $1.50.
(*Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the Schocken Library.*)

ONE CANNOT help feeling that it is a shame that practically none of our Catholic publishing houses seems to have the wish of publishing books as handsomely bound and printed as, e.g., the Schocken Publishers; from the good-looking dust wrappers and the tasteful bindings to the type and paper these inexpensive volumes are a joy for any collector and an ornament of any bookshelf. The only thing one might worry about is: whether to leave them in their colorful jackets or to strip them. That is a problem, really!

Apart from the esthetic enjoyment these volumes give me, I found a great deal of worthwhile reading matter. Sampling Heinrich Heine's "Rabbi of Bacherach" and the beautiful prayers in "Language of Faith," I found capable and competent translations, some of the psalms not quite up to Pius XII's latest psalter, nor to Ronald Knox's version, but by all means stirring prayers and witnesses of Judah's glory of having fashioned the world's prayer.

"The Land of Sheba" not only opens up a part of Jewry which is practically unknown to us, but gives off sociological, religious and cultural sidelights that fascinate. Isn't it the only Jewish community with an uninterrupted tradition of 2,000 years against a background of Arabian desert and a Mohammedan majority. The *peculiar* sense of humor and grotesque are again alive within worthwhile books. All three books should be read by anybody interested in "interracial" relations and in fighting the growing anti-Semitism of our days.

The symphonic climax of this five part publishing event is raised to a higher pitch in the fourth book, the autobiography of an eighteenth century rabbi who, though a true child of enlightenment and rationalism, unknown to himself, never outgrew his rabbinical presumption that the world owed him a living to enable him to live for the pursuits of his mind only. He left his wife and his family, his ghetto, his faith, and became a restless wanderer. There is so much in common between him and a Ferdinand Lasalle that almost a pattern of the Jewish intellectual becomes visible—an exiled mind and dogged champion of a cause with a strong messianic mission. Again the sociological sidelights are the most interesting: the highly intellectual Jewish circles of Berlin, the lowbrow commercialism of the Hamburg Jews and the refined Jewry of Amsterdam which had a long sephardic tradition of contacts with high secular, Christian and Islamic learning from Spain, since the leading Jews in Holland were refugees from the Iberian Peninsula.

Ever since I read Martin Buber's beautiful collection of Hassidic legends—of the great pietistic and mystical revival among the Ashkenazic Jews in Galicia, Poland and Russia west of the "Jew line"—I have been struck by the strange mingling of sublime and grotesque: lives, writings and deeds that are akin to true mysticism on one hand and scurrilous reports resembling sorcery on the other. The same is evident here: initiated in the Kabbala and its gnostic mysticism, young Solomon Maimon searches out a venerable and saintly rabbi. You would expect him to proceed toward one of the inner castles of mysticism. But what do you find? He tries to learn how to make himself invisible in order to play tricks on others. On the other hand he tells of a rabbi, Simon of Lubtsch who practiced "Galut," continuous wandering—which is, by the way, also found in the Christian mysticism of the Orthodox in Russia—a form of supreme detachment, in keeping with the collective "Galut" of the whole Jewish people. This already emaciated wanderer for God's sake finally starves himself to death because he finds himself unable to atone otherwise for his sin. Maimon es-

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caped from this stark anti-humanism into the sweet reasonableness of the West. This small, slim book has more to say about the "Jewish question" than many analyses. The lovable hero, with all his shortcomings, just has to live to open our eyes for many other minorities, forced into ghettos and feared.

The full climax is reached in the last volume (No. 2 of this series), Y. F. Baer's "Galut"—dealing with the haunting problem of Jewish lasting exile, Judah's longing for a homeland from the days of Egypt, Babylon, Hellenium, the Middle Ages and present day Zionism, with its metaphysical interpretation and with its religious meaning. What surprises the Christian perhaps most is the very fact that Galut is seen and accepted as a problem and has found a satisfactory answer by great Jewish rabbis, by-passing Christ as Messiah and classifying Christianity with Islam as a—daughter religion. There is no doubt this book makes painful reading, especially in its violent accusations against the mendicant monks of the Middle Ages and the policy of several pontiffs. This is not the place to investigate the truth of the bitter accusations, nor to argue with a sad and bitter man, nor am I equipped to do so. "Among the Christians . . . the most pious were also the greatest haters of the Jews" is one of those statements which are hard to hear and hard to believe. When the German Jesuit, Father Browe, published an article on medieval anti-Semitism in the Innsbruck *Quarterly of Theology* in 1938 just before Hitler invaded Austria, he stated bluntly that the numbers of Jews killed by Christians in the Middle Ages was far in excess of the number of Christians killed during all the fierce persecution of the Church during the first three hundred years of our era; in other words: the generations who followed the martyrs forgot what made martyrs and killed others because of their faith in terrifying numbers. We should not forget that together with the killing there went expulsion, looting, cruelty and expropriation and, last but not least, segregation, the ghetto.

There is no hope that our professional anti-Semites will ever read this book; if they do read it, they will only denounce the author, his obvious vindictiveness and his bitterness. Yet, what is needed is proof that all the sweeping generalizations Mr. Baer makes are as mistaken as some of the things he offers, e.g., "The mendicant friars spread an ascetic, theocratic and partly eschatological version of Christianity . . . and were able to make use of the accumulated causes for social friction . . . for the fight against the Jews." For such nonsense the author ought to be rapped on the knuckles and the Schocken editor should have questioned this passage. Some of the things he says are not true of the "mendicant friars" but of the Albigensians. The idea of Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Dominic going around capitalizing on frictions to fight the Jews is laughable.

Unfortunately Rabbi Baer has a great many statements of this and kindred flavor. This is too bad, as it will only add fuel to dislike on both sides: uninformed Jews will contract hatred against institutions that are borne forward by charity, and Catholics of the anti-Semitic type will dismiss his book as lying propaganda, while many of the sad things he only mentions—the figures and facts —would have served a good cause: to illustrate to ourselves the necessity of watching every small symptom of racial discrimination among ourselves as a danger signal.

I am sure Rabbi Baer will find contradiction in his own ranks, especially with statements of inverted racialism like this one: "Those Jews are deceived who think they can merge in the nations, take part in their casually determined fortunes, and escape the supracausal intervention of God." Only deeply religious Jews who see in "Galut" what a Christian sees in Christ, their absolute destiny, will accept this statement. It is pregnant with dangerous possibilities in these days of excitement. In short, No. 2 of this series, unless ignored by the public, is, to say the least, a very controversial book.

Those of us who are interested with deep sympathy in the plight of Jewry and the faith of Judah may be interested in one last observation. All through these books (and also in "Basic Judaism") I became aware of one aspect of Jewish religion: that it has no revealed mysteries and is the most *naturally* rational religion known. This may explain in part the singular attitude of Jews toward our Faith, an attitude that sometimes shocks or frightens. It seems that the pre-Trinitarian conception of God appears unbearably cold to him who has heard the Word become Flesh, in Whom was Life, Who sent the Spirit of Love.

H. A. REINHOLD.

Adventures With a Texas Naturalist. Roy Bedichek. Illustration by Ward Lockwood. Doubleday. $3.50.

OUR THOREAUVIANS have come mostly from New England, or at least the eastern part of the country. One thinks of John Burroughs, Bradford Torrey, Henry Beston, and the others who have meditated upon nature in her Eastern Seaboard aspect. We have been lacking for a long time a Thoreauvian from, say, the southwest.

We lack no longer. We now have this book by Roy Bedichek, Texan educator, outdoorsman, and contemplative. Given a year's leave of absence by means of a fund collected and adminitstered by the Texas Historical Association, Roy Bedichek withdrew to the solitude of an ancient stone house on Edwards Plateau and devoted himself to setting down the record of his lifetime of nature-watching and nature-thinking. There has resulted this volume of "Adventures With A Texas Naturalist." It is a wise and friendly and thoughful book, and belongs with the best on anyone's shelf of American nature-writing.

There is plenty of fun in it. (A native thinks that the name for the pileated woodpecker is "*good*-God," and explains that "when people see a woodpecker as big as a crow, they jus' natchally say "*Good* God!"). There is also plenty of serious thought. Watching a seaside heronry, Roy Bedichek concludes like this:

> Under this seaside spell I repudiate mechanism and all its thin and shivering conceptions. In this demonstration "There is more in the result than we abstract in the casual conditions." Here's an arithmetic in which two and two make five. I cannot accept such a creation, or the thousand and one other cretive manifestations all about us, as something thrown up by chance after the long lapse of ages, "a fortuitous concourse of atoms," in the play and interplay of mechanical forces. If chance creates, why call it "chance"? The very conception of chance, of course, has no validity. It is a scaffolding the human mind tears down and junks as soon as its temporary purpose is served. It is already defined away.

Altogether a rewarding book, this, nature-wise and human-wise.

ALAN DEVOE

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Before the Deluge. Mark Aldanov. Scribner's. $3.50.

THIS "novel of Imperial Russia" is of an older and more serious school than the Hollywoodized historical fiction so familiar of recent years on the best-seller lists. Mark Aldanov is the author of biographies of Tolstoy and Byron, as well as of "The Fifth Seal"; and in this book he has attempted to paint a panoramic picture of a society in flux in the manner of Tolstoy, while many of his characters follow the Byronic pattern, with Slavic variations. Unfortunately the result may be described as Tolstoy and water, for Aldanov lacks the sweeping power of his master, though he has written a book which is, like the curate's egg, excellent in parts.

Unlike the majority of American historical novels today, this is not escape literature. Aldanov is concerned with the springs from which welled up the disastrous floods of our times: the Marxist revolutionary movement, Bismarckian fascism, Disraelian imperialism, Wagnerian anti-Semitism, and perverted romanticism. The book deals from a Russian point of view with the seven eventful years of European history from 1874, which saw the marriage of Queen Victoria's son to the Czar's daughter, to Alexander II's assassination in 1881, on the very day set for the proclamation of the reforms hoped for by those who had seen in that marriage a constitutionalizing influence on autocracy. The central character is the dilettante artist Mamontov, a pure Byronic type who ranges restlessly from court circles to the company of revolutionaries in vain search of integration. His wanderings over the face of Europe enable Aldanov to introduce sketches of the makers and shakers of the times: Bismarck, Disraeli, Gladstone, Dostoevsky, Bakunin, Marx, Engels, Wagner, Liszt.

The transitions from fiction to history are, however, as breathless as the feats of the circus performers who fascinate Aldanov and his hero, and many a reader will be left floundering. Rich as the book is in interpretative profiles and vividly realized episodes of life on many levels, it is not a successful novel, for the mixture of history, biography, and fiction escapes its author's management. This confusion in the form and execution of the book is unfortunately reflected in the translation, which stands in glaring need of editing for jolting shifts in idiom and slips in meaning, and in the sloppy proofreading.

MASON WADE.

The Bear Coughs at the North Pole. Robert Payne. Dodd. $2.75.

BLACK sampans shuttling from bank to bank through the morning mist of the Yangtse, coolie-chairs in the streets of Chungking sweltering under a cobalt-blue sky, and a lemon moon hung like a lantern in the night are some of the memories and images Robert Payne, young English author now in this country, brought back from China and uses to produce the exotic atmosphere of "The Bear Coughs at the North Pole." More subtle and even more Chinese are the philosophical discussions, placid and detached, between the Old Minister and his son, while the yellow dust ascends, the bamboo houses of Chunking go up in crackling flames, and people die during a Japanese bombing.

"'A bear coughing in the North Pole,' says the Old Minister, 'stirs the sands of the Sahara. If I breathe—if I breathe only once—I so displace the air that perhaps in a thousand years time a man may be killed, or a woman may give birth, or a whole nation may be set in flames.'" The interplay of human acts is an intriguing idea. It is expressed by the Chinese philosopher with pardonable Oriental hyperbole. But it is not developed in the novel any more than should be expected in a story of seven characters whose lives converge during a single day into which are crowded enough action and emotion, enough physical and psychological drama for half a lifetime.

The river rats, the vodka factory, the Street of the Prostitutes, the illicit traffic in opium, the stenches of the bath-house, murder, promiscuity, and sudden and violent death give the story its dominant effect of sordidness, that sometimes becomes gruesomeness. To call it a picaresque novel would be an understatement: the only characters with any admirable qualities in the book are the two Chinese government officials.

Mr. Payne's detailed descriptions of intimate sexual relations, always promiscuous, recall Robert Herrick's discussion of the difference between literature and dirt in the old *Bookman*. They could well have been omitted without any loss of interest or dramatic effectiveness.

BONAVENTURE SCHWINN.

Greener Than You Think. Ward Moore. William Sloane. $3.50.

THE BARE story of Ward Moore's "Greener Than You Think" is so far removed from the ordinary that a summary seems unavoidable.

Albert Weener, a nondescript salesman, lands the job of selling a substance called the Metamorphizer, which is a tonic for plant life. He unsuspectingly makes the first application to the front yard of Mrs. Dinkman in Los Angeles. It soon develops that the inventor has overlooked the matter of how to check the growth of metamorphized vegetation. Within twelve hours the grass is a foot high; within a day, six feet; after a few days it has reached the roof tops and is beginning to spill over into contiguous areas. The fire department is summoned; flame throwers are used; tanks are called into action. But to no avail; after a few weeks Los Angeles has to be evacuated. This is the beginning of humanity's battle against the Grass. As the phenomenal spread continues, incendiary bombs and even the atomic weapon itself are employed in futile attempts to stem the encroachment. The Grass gradually swallows up the West Coast, then all of America, then South America; and finally, leaping the Pacific, it begins an attack upon the Eurasian land mass. The last time we see Albert Weener all continents have been covered, and he is a fugitive upon a ship in the Atlantic, fatuously trusting that some means will yet be found to halt the noxious growth which his ignorance unloosed.

One might read "Greener Than You Think" for a good many pages and feel that it is nothing more than an ingeniously written farce. The author has an extraordinary inventiveness: to follow the progress of the Grass for three hundred and fifty pages without falling into patterns of reference, as he succeeds in doing, might tax the resources of the best narrator. He has also a talent for the comedy of situation, and there is some fine irony at the expense of the hand-me-down ideas of this generation.

These are proofs of the author's skill, but they are not all. Mr. Moore writes as one well versed in the handling of concepts, and there are, amid the hilarity, unmistakable passages of reflective probing. If the story is taken as parabolical, the novel becomes a deadly satire.

What then is the Grass? There is much to indicate

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that it is scientific materialism and the amoralism which must be its accompaniment. Once science is advertised as the means of access to truth, its history becomes dynamic. Like the Grass, it presumes to feed on anything; it has no more thought of confining itself to a province of experience than the Grass had of remaining in Mrs. Dinkman's front yard. And like the Grass again, it promises to run us off the planet unless means are found to set it bounds.

The inventor of the Metamorphizer confesses in testimony before the Committee to Investigate Dangerous Vegetation:

> The authority I have flouted, in my arrogance as you call it, is that authority all scientists recognized in the days when science was scientific and called itself, not boastfully by the name of all knowledge, but more humbly and decently, natural philosophy. That authority is what theologians term the Will of God: others, the life force, the immaterial principle, the common unconscious, or whatever you will. When I, along with all the academic robots whom you admire, denied that authority, we did not make ourselves, as we thought, men of pure science, but, on the contrary, by deposing one master we invited in a horde of others. Since we could not submit to moral force we submitted in our blind stupidity—we called it the rejection of metaphysical concepts—to financial force, to political force, to social force; and finally, since there was no longer any reward in itself for our speculations, we submitted to the lust for personal aggrandizement in fortune, in notoriety, in castebound irresponsibility, and even for the hypocritical backslapping of our fellows.

And further:

> In a word, it was the aimlessness and falsity of the nineteenth century coming back in the window after having been booted out the door. . . .

Since this is a typical investigating committee, such testimony is not understood, and the witness is advised to see a psychiatrist.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Moore has written an unusual novel and a significant one.

RICHARD M. WEAVER.

The Questing Spirit. Edited by Halford E. Luccock and Frances Brentano. Coward McCann. $5.00.

"THE QUESTING SPIRIT" is subtitled, "Religion in the Literature of Our Times." From authors, clergymen, scientists, and publicists, the editors have made a selection of 400 stories, poems, plays and so-called affirmations (the latter being statements of personal faith) all with a religious or mystical theme.

Mechanically, the book is an admirable piece of work. Divisions and subdivisions have grouped together such selections as have a similarity of thought or purpose. The indices, one of authors and one of first lines, in addition to the well arranged table of contents, make for easy accessibility. The index of authors, moreover, carefully identifies the source of each extract.

As far as content is concerned, the Catholic reader will find it hard to wax enthusiastic over "The Questing Spirit." Despite the inclusion of some half dozen Catholic authors, such as Chesterton, Belloc, Meynell and Kilmer, the general tone of the book is a widely "liberal" one—and a vague sort of liberalism at that. To the reader who himself has firmly founded convictions, there is a pitiableness in so many efforts to find a faith, with no other guide than one's personal feelings and emotions.

This reviewer must confess to an antipathy for all an-

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thologies, outside of high school classes in literature. It has always seemed to me that a work worth reading, is worth reading in its entirety. Therefore I find it hard to assign a value to "The Questing Spirit." Certainly it is hard to see that it will lead any soul closer to God. The religious apologist may find it useful as a source book of other men's thoughts and aberrations. The merely curious may be entertained by the exposition of proud humanity's bewilderment and confusion.

LEO J. TRESE.

Thirst. Charles Lee Robinson. John Day. $2.75.

MR. ROBINSON'S novel is the source of one major surprise, and that non-literary: how is it that the author, the possessor of what used to be called a "social conscience," remains in his Foreign Service post? I wish to congratulate him for his courage and for having earned the thousand dollar Foreign Service Contest award. He may need it yet.

I wish I could say that Mr. Robinson's literary abilities matched his strong qualities of forthrightness and honesty. But the honesty of the reviewer, whose concern is necessarily a literary one, dictates otherwise. For a second surprise in "Thirst" is its incredibly bad writing. One has only to open the book at its first page and read, "the water followed the man-made canals, like a lover, now slow and languorous, now flashing and impetuous, to lave the dry earth with the wetness of life." Later on we find this sparkling passage: "'Must you, Mario?' she whispered compassionately. 'Yes,' he replied, simply. Picking her up in his arms . . ." and so on.

Now, the general scheme of the book is acceptable. It attempts bravely to sum up the spirit of modern Chile for yanqui readers. Mr. Robinson obviously knows the land and the people he is talking about, and usually he makes them live, if not to an exciting degree. He also has learned the popular device of binding together his scene by the near apotheosis of one element: elsewhere it has been Wind, Grass and Whatnot; here it is Water. Whence the title. The plot, such as it is, revolves around the struggle over water rights between die-hard aristocrat Don Francisco and his fiercely independent sister, Mercedes. It will be kinder to book and reader to leave the outcome of this struggle as a surprise. Which brings me back to my initial surprise and I can't quite get over it.

ROBERT G. COHN.

Traditionally Pennsylvania Dutch. Edward C. Smith and Virginia van H. Thompson. Hastings House. $3.50.

ANYONE interested in American folklore will find this fragmentary series of brief notes on community life, crafts and food absorbing. Each item is accompanied by an unspectacular full-page black and white drawing and smaller sepia sketches. The text includes recipes for apple butter, Schnitz un Knepp (apples and dumplings with ham) and pretzel soup. J. A. E.

The Book of Saints. Compiled by the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate. Macmillan. $6.00.

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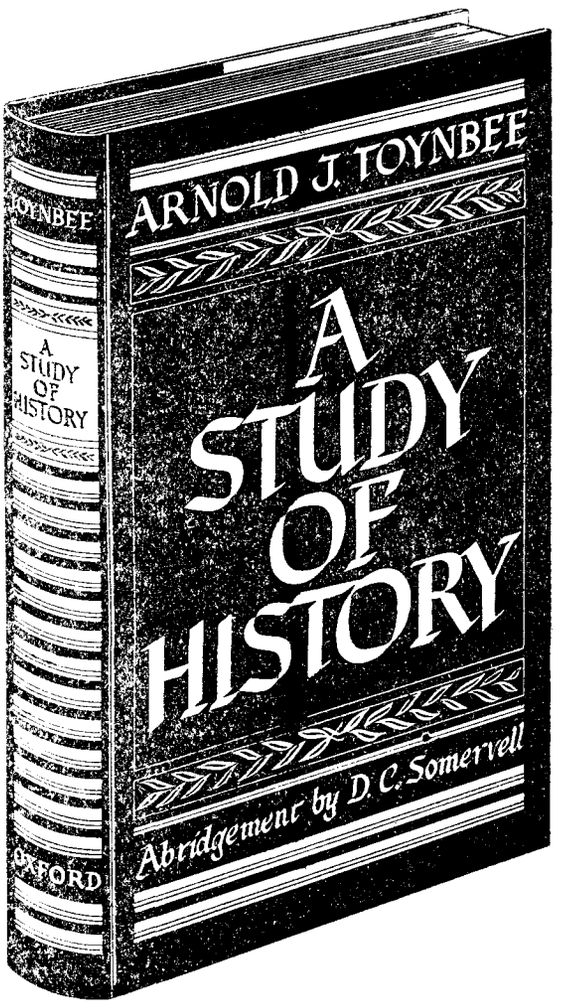

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The Inner Forum

Thanksgiving Food Collection

THE week of November 23 to November 30 is devoted to collecting food for the starving children in the Far East and in Europe by the various dioceses and archdioceses throughout the country. The drive is sponsored by the War Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which conducted a similar campaign a year ago and collected 28,000,000 cans of food for war victims overseas. This year's drive is also a direct response to the appeals for aid made recently by Pope Pius XII, President Truman and others.

The food collection is being carried out on a parish basis, with the congregations in each of 15,000 American parishes urged to bring cans of nourishing food to some collection center, designated by the pastor in each case. Foodstuffs which are particularly welcome in meeting the current need are canned milk, condensed milk, cocoa, dried beans, flour, fruits, vegetables, cornmeal and others. The nationwide goal for Catholics is 25,000,000 pounds of canned foodstuffs for shipment overseas.

This week-long drive was appropriately enough scheduled to include the national observance of Thanksgiving Day and the plan is to ship what is collected in this "Thanksgiving Food Collection" so that it reaches the needy families by Christmas. The estimate is that due to poor harvests and other causes more than 20,000,000 children are in dire need of the most simple foods to survive the rigors of this winter. In a recent plea to the Catholics of the United States on behalf of the starving people of Europe, Pope Pius XII said: "Christ Himself asks you for the bread of which His poor are in want, every mouthful of food which you give to them is given to Him. Every mouthful which you refuse them is refused to Him . . ." The drive was launched in many American parishes by a letter from the bishop read to the faithful at the Sunday Masses, November 16.

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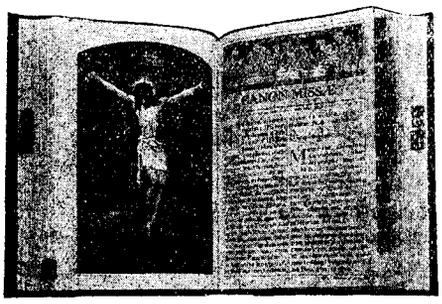

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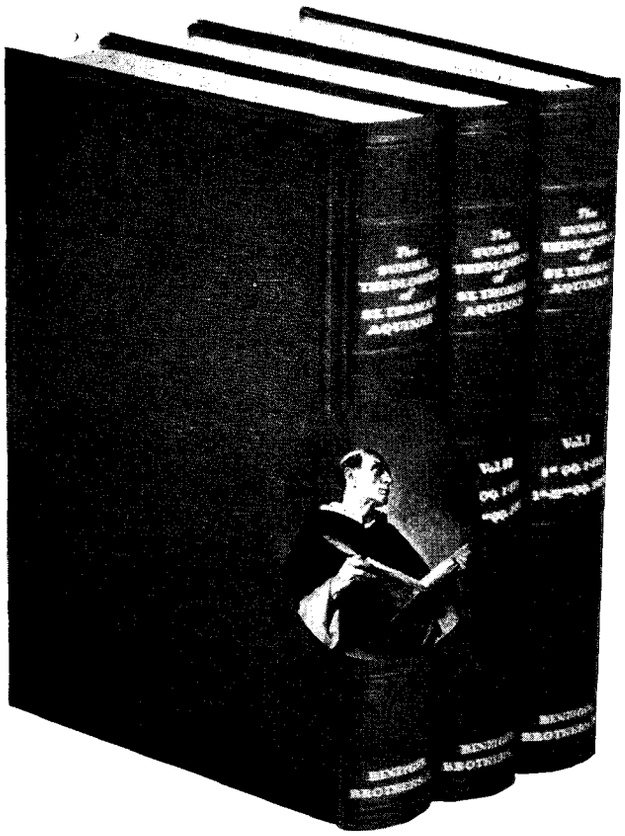

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